

3.0 Project Description

3.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

3.1 PROJECT LOCATION AND SETTING

3.1.1 PROJECT LOCATION

The proposed Department of Water and Power Specific Plan Amendment (the project) is located within the City of Seal Beach (City), in the northwestern portion of Orange County; refer to [Exhibit 3-1, *Regional Vicinity*](#). The project involves a 10.9-acre site (Assessor's Parcel Numbers [APNs] 043-171-02, -172-07 (portions), -172-08, -172-12, and -172-13), which currently consists of vacant land, portions of a residence and commercial facility, and portions of the San Gabriel River and associated bike trail (San Gabriel River Bike Trail). The project site was formerly utilized by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (DWP) for power plant facilities and operations. The project site is generally bounded by Marina Drive to the north, 1st Street to the east, the Rivers End Café/beach parking lot to the south, and the San Gabriel River to the west; refer to [Exhibit 3-2, *Local Vicinity*](#).

Regional access to the site is provided via Interstate 405 (I-405), Interstate 605 (I-605), and State Route 22 (SR-22), all approximately 2.5 miles to the northeast. Pacific Coast Highway (PCH) is located approximately 0.5 mile to the northeast. The primary local roadways providing access to the site are Marina Drive and 1st Street. Generally, the project site is situated within a residential and public beach area within the City.

3.1.2 PROJECT SETTING (EXISTING CONDITIONS)

The project site consists of vacant disturbed land, with the exception of a residential structure located within the northwestern portion of the site. Currently, the project site undergoes routine maintenance activities (i.e., soil tilling and weed removal). The western portion of the project site consists of the San Gabriel River and associated bike trail (San Gabriel River Bike Trail). Approximately 0.2 acres of land within the northwestern portion of the project site consists of the residence and vacant portions of a commercial facility. On-site topography generally slopes south and west, toward the Pacific Ocean and San Gabriel River, respectively.

The City is divided into five Planning Areas, in order to determine and consider future development. As illustrated on the *City of Seal Beach General Plan* (General Plan) Land Use Element Figure 1, *Planning Area 1 Land Use Map*, the project site is located within the boundaries of Planning Area 1 (Old Town/Surfside). Land Use Element Figure 6, *City of Seal Beach Land Use Map*, shows the project site as Open Space; refer to Land Use Element Figure 6, *City of Seal Beach Land Use Map*. As depicted in Land Use Element Figure 9, *Los Angeles Department of Water and Power Specific Plan*, the project site is located within the boundaries of the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power Specific Plan (DWP Specific Plan) area. The City's Zoning Map (Old Town and Bridgeport) identifies zoning for the project site as SPR (Specific Plan Regulation) and SC (Service Commercial).



Regional Vicinity

Exhibit 3-1



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DEPARTMENT OF WATER AND POWER SPECIFIC PLAN AMENDMENT

Local Vicinity

Exhibit 3-2

SURROUNDING LAND USES

Land uses adjacent to the project site include the following:

- North: Commercial uses (California Everglades) and Marina Drive are situated to the north. Multi-family residential uses (River Beach Townhomes by the Sea) and the Marina Center and Park are located to the northeast of the project site. The General Plan land use designation to the north is Residential High Density, Industrial – Oil Extraction, and Park. The zoning districts to the north are RHD-33 (Residential High Density-33), OE (Oil Extraction), and OS-PR (Open Space Parks and Recreation).
- East: 1st Street bounds the project site to the east. Single-family and multi-family residential uses are located along the east side of 1st Street and along Ocean Avenue. The General Plan land use designation is Residential High Density and Residential Low Density. The zoning districts are RHD-20 (Residential High Density-20) and RLD-9 (Residential Low Density 9).
- South: A public beach, associated commercial uses (i.e., beach parking lot and Rivers End Café) and the River's End Staging Area (RESA) are situated to the south of the project site. The General Plan land use designation is Beach. The zoning district is BEA (Beach).
- West: The channelized San Gabriel River and associated bike trail (San Gabriel River Bike Trail) are situated to the west of the project site. General Plan designations and zoning districts are not applicable to uses adjoining the project site to the west, as these uses are associated with the San Gabriel River.

3.2 BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

The project site has a long history of use as a power generating station, dating back to 1925, when Los Angeles Gas & Electric constructed a facility on portions of the site. In 1936, Los Angeles Gas & Electric sold the facility to the City of Los Angeles. The City of Los Angeles operated the power plant for several years before decommissioning the facility in 1966. The power plant was demolished in 1967. In the mid-1980's, the site underwent environmental cleanup and remediation and was re-graded.

In 1979, the City, with the assistance of the California State Coastal Conservancy, undertook an extensive community planning process that explored reuse options for the property. The *City of Los Angeles Department of Water and Power Specific Plan* (DWP Specific Plan) was formally adopted by the City in November 1982. That Plan established the primary uses of the site, which included a 300-room hotel and open space/parkland. The DWP Specific Plan also established regulations and conditions intended to provide for open space and visitor serving land uses. Development standards were also created specifically for selected portions of the property. The Specific Plan was amended in January 1996 in order to reduce the hotel use to a maximum of 150-rooms.

In 2003 DWP sold the property to Bay City Partners, LLC (BCP). BCP has submitted an application for residential uses on the northern portion of the project site; the remainder of the site is reserved for the future development of open space/passive park uses (the proposed project).

3.3 PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS

3.3.1 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed project involves amendments to the 1996 DWP Specific Plan (proposed Specific Plan Amendment) that would allow for the development of a 48-lot residential development (Tentative Tract Map No. 17425); refer to Exhibit 3-3, *Conceptual Site Layout*. The residential uses would be located on approximately 4.5 acres in the northern portion of the project site. BCP would construct the project in one phase, which would include the finished pads and all infrastructure necessary to serve the new residential development. Residential units would be developed individually by homeowners as custom homes, depending on market conditions and demand. Maintenance of streets, common landscaped areas, and major infrastructure would be funded through the Community Facilities District Act (i.e., Mello-Roos). The remaining approximately 6.4 acres of the project site would be used for open space/ passive recreation uses.

PURPOSE OF THE SPECIFIC PLAN AMENDMENT

The proposed Specific Plan Amendment is intended to provide a clear framework for future development and improvements at the project site. The proposal would require a General Plan Amendment, Zone Change, DWP Specific Plan Amendment, Redevelopment Plan Amendment, Tentative Tract Map, and Lot Line Adjustment.

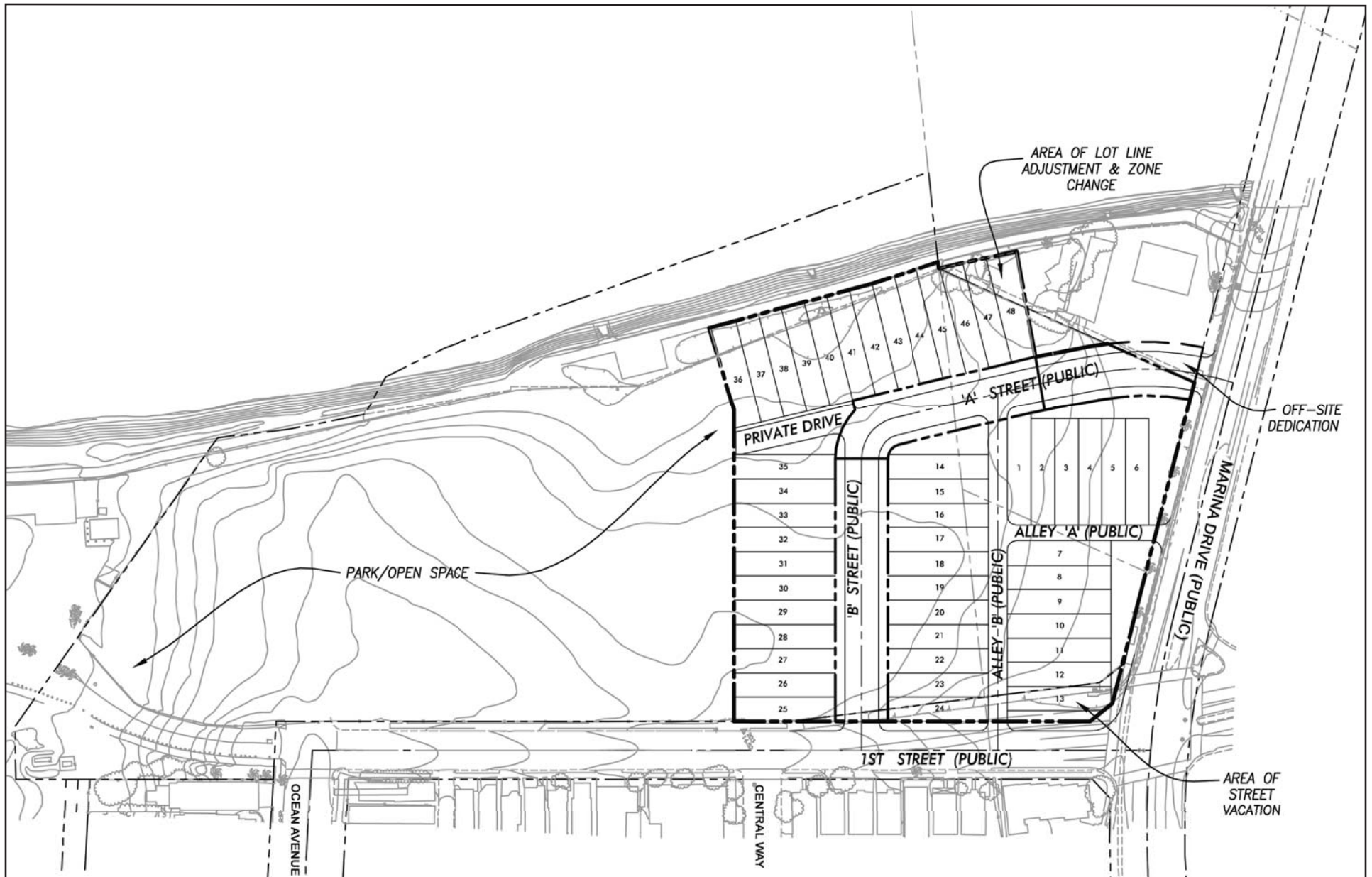
The General Plan Amendment, DWP Specific Plan Amendment and Zone Change, if approved, would allow the property to be developed for residential uses. The Tentative Tract Map and Lot Line Adjustment, if approved, would allow the property to be subdivided into single-family parcels. The proposed amendments are intended to address aspects of each policy document that are not consistent with the proposed project, as described below.

General Plan

The General Plan, Planning Area 1 Land Use Map, shows the project site as Open Space. The text in the General Plan Land Use Element, however, refers to this area as the DWP Specific Plan. The 1996 DWP Specific Plan limits the northern portion of the DWP site to visitor-serving uses and the southern portion to open space. The project proposes an amendment to the Land Use Element of the General Plan to designate 6.4 acres Open Space, 4.5 acres Residential High Density, and 0.1 acres General Commercial.

Zoning/DWP Specific Plan

According to the Zoning Code, the project site includes the SPR (Specific Plan Regulation) Zone and SC (Service Commercial) District. Specific uses and development standards are dictated by the DWP Specific Plan. The DWP Specific Plan designates the land south of Central Way as Public Open Space/Parkland with the balance of the site designated as Visitor Serving Uses, with a 150-room hotel and related uses. Implementation of the proposed project would change the site designation in order to allow for the development of residential and park/open space uses. Refer to Exhibit 3-3 and Table 3-1, *Proposed DWP Specific Plan Amendment*.



Source: Fuscoe Engineering, June 2011.

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DEPARTMENT OF WATER AND POWER SPECIFIC PLAN AMENDMENT

Conceptual Site Layout


Exhibit 3-3

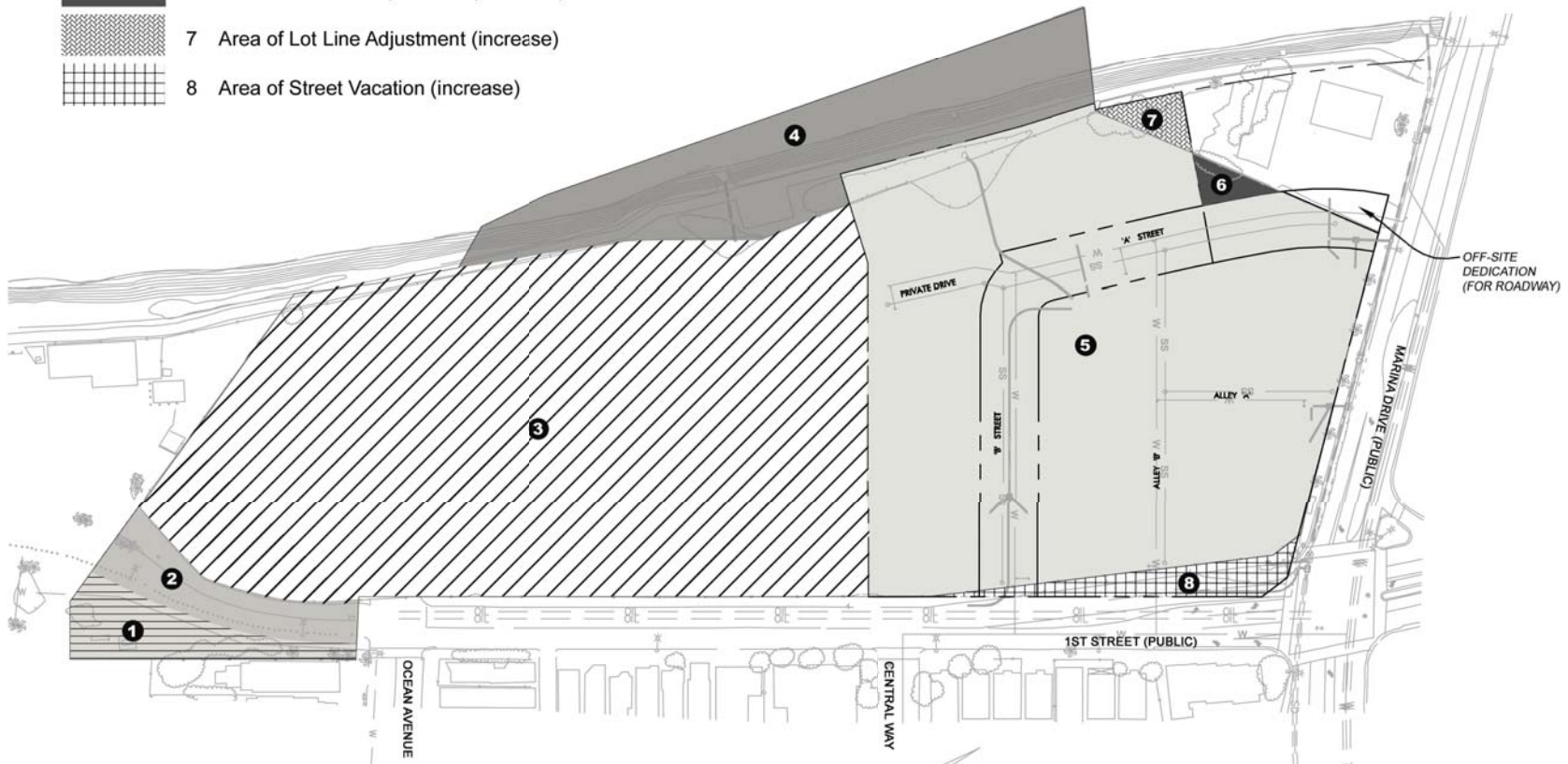
**Table 3-1
Proposed DWP Specific Plan Amendment**

Area	Assessor's Parcel Number (APN)	Description/Notes	Square Feet	Acres	Existing DWP Specific Plan	Proposed DWP Specific Plan
Existing Specific Plan Area						
1	043-171-02 (in part)	Sewer Easement	10,768	0.3	Yes	Yes
2	043-171-02 (in part)	Driveway	10,233	0.2	Yes	Yes
3	043-172-13 (in part)	Park/Open Space	206,334	4.7	Yes	Yes
4	043-172-08 (in part)	River/Bike Trail	51,972	1.2	Yes	Yes
5 ¹	043-172-08 (in part) 043-172-13 (in part)	Area of Residential Use	184,160	4.2	Yes	Yes
6	043-172-13 (in part)	Portion of DWP Specific Plan Area	2,015	0.1	Yes	No
<i>Subtotal</i>			<i>465,482</i>	<i>10.7</i>		
Proposed DWP Specific Plan Amendment/Changes						
6	043-172-13 (in part)	Area of Lot Line Adjustment (Portion of DWP Specific Plan Area Decrease)	-2,015	-0.1	Yes	No
7	043-172-07 (in part)	Area of Lot Line Adjustment (Area of Residential Use Increase)	2,400	0.1	No	Yes
8	043-172-12	Area of Street Vacation (Area of Residential Use Increase)	7,626	0.2	No	Yes
<i>Subtotal of DWP Specific Plan Amendment Increase</i>			<i>8,011</i>	<i>0.2</i>		
<i>Total Amended DWP Specific Plan Area</i>			<i>473,493</i>	<i>10.9</i>		
Notes: 1 - This area is included within the legal description of the 1996 DWP Specific Plan. The Zoning Map does not contain a zoning designation for portions of this area.						

The proposed Specific Plan Amendment would modify the boundaries of the DWP Specific Plan by adding approximately 8,011 square feet (0.2 acre) for future residential use within the proposed DWP Specific Plan. No zone change is proposed for 9.5 acres, which would remain SPR Zone. The proposed Specific Plan Amendment involves amendments to the Official Zoning Map, changing the site's zoning districts, as follows: 0.05 acre would change from SPR Zone to SC District; 1.3 acres would change from No Zoning to SPR Zone; and 0.1 acre would change from SC District to SPR Zone; refer to Exhibit 3-4, Area Layout.

LEGEND

-  1 Sewer Easement
-  2 Driveway
-  3 Park/Open Space
-  4 River / Bike Trail
-  5 Area of Residential Use
-  6 Area of Lot Line Adjustment (decrease)
-  7 Area of Lot Line Adjustment (increase)
-  8 Area of Street Vacation (increase)



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DEPARTMENT OF WATER AND POWER SPECIFIC PLAN AMENDMENT

Area Layout

Exhibit 3-4

Allowed Residential Development

The proposed Specific Plan Amendment would allow for residential uses consistent with the development standards of the RHD-20 Zone (Title 11). The RHD-20 Zone would allow a maximum density of one unit per 2,178 square feet of lot area. The allowable lot coverage would be 75 percent. The maximum building height for residential structures would not exceed 25 feet. All setbacks and landscaping requirements for the RHD-20 Zone would apply to the proposed project.

Circulation

As part of the proposed DWP Specific Plan Amendment, access to the development would no longer be restricted to Marina Drive.

Redevelopment Plan

The Redevelopment Plan Map and text designate the approximately 10.9-acre property as Commercial/Park or undesignated. The Redevelopment Plan would be amended in order to conform to the project.

TENTATIVE TRACT MAP

Implementation of the proposed project would develop Tentative Tract Map No. 17425 within the approximately 4.5 acres in the northern portion of the project site; refer to [Exhibit 3-3](#). Lots 1 through 48 would consist of residential lots, ranging in size from approximately 2,680 square feet to 3,280 square feet each. Lots A through F would consist of public streets. Additionally, there are landscaped areas/lots ranging in size from approximately 1,030 square feet to 3,960 square feet. Development of the proposed Tentative Tract Map No. 17425 would also involve the construction of 'A' Street (a public street), which would intersect with Marina Drive at the off-site commercial property located northwest of the project site. Development of this roadway at Assessor's Parcel Number (APN) 043-172-07 (approximately 2,100 square feet) would require a recorded off-site roadway easement with the City Public Works Department.

The proposed lots generally would reflect the development pattern of Old Town Seal Beach, with a minimum permitted lot width of 25 feet by 100 feet, although the majority of the lots would be 25 feet by 108 to 110 feet. The proposed housing types consist of a mix of alley-loaded and street-loaded garages.

LOT LINE ADJUSTMENT

Project implementation would require a lot line adjustment at the northwestern corner of the project site in order to square off the boundaries of Tentative Tract Map No. 17425. Approximately 2,400 square feet of land would be included within the proposed DWP Specific Plan area and approximately 2,015 of land would be excluded from the proposed DWP Specific Plan.

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN

While the project does not involve construction of single-family dwellings within the new subdivision, future builders and owners would be bound by a set of architectural standards to be adopted as part of the Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions (CC&R's) for the Tract Map. The CC&R's are enforceable by the Home Owners Association (HOA) only. Minimum building standards proposed by the applicant include, but are not limited to, the following:

- All construction must meet the requirements of the Zoning Code RHD-20 (Residential High Density-20) standards.
- Housing Styles
 - Designs that are architecturally interesting, promote diversity, and are compatible with Old Town Seal Beach are strongly encouraged.
- Foundations and Exterior Walls
 - Must be brick, stone, stucco, or other commercially available siding materials.
- Roofs
 - Combinations of interesting roof elements are encouraged.
 - Roof mounted solar panels are acceptable if integrated into the roofing materials and design.
- Retaining Walls and Fencing
 - Shall be of materials architecturally compatible with any adjacent structures and landscaping. Standard concrete block is unacceptable, although concrete architectural walls may be allowed.
 - Shall be landscaped to blend with the surrounding areas.
 - Fencing around homes shall be compatible with architecture of primary structure.
- Landscaping
 - Is required and should enhance the surroundings of the primary structure.
 - Removal of existing trees and shrubbery should be minimized (for remodels or additions).

OPEN SPACE

The proposed project includes approximately 6.4 acres of open space/parkland located southerly of the residential uses discussed above. The DWP Specific Plan currently provides that "Open spaces shall be located on the southerly 70 percent of the DWP site." If the project is approved, the amended Specific Plan would show the residential and open space areas and indicate a specified acreage of open space on the portion of the property southerly of the proposed residential development. Proposed park uses would include, but not be limited to, natural areas with trails, passive turf areas, and neighborhood-serving play areas (e.g., tot lots).

LANDSCAPING

Landscaping would be similar to other planting found in Old Town (combining ornamental plant material with native plantings). The project would have a traditional curb/gutter, planted parkway, and a sidewalk configuration that matches the design throughout the majority of Old Town.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND PUBLIC UTILITIES

Procurement, development, and construction of infrastructure improvements would be required. Necessary utilities include, but are not limited to: water distribution system, wastewater system, storm water conveyance system, dry utilities (e.g., electricity and natural gas), and roads and sidewalks. All necessary utilities would be installed to the property line of the newly created residential lots. All utilities shall be underground. The streets, alleys, and infrastructure all would be constructed to City standards. All streets would be dedicated to the City when the Final Tract Map is recorded, except for a proposed private drive serving lots 36 through 40.

Vehicular and Pedestrian Access

Implementation of the proposed Tentative Tract Map No. 17425 would result in the construction of two public streets ('A' Street and 'B' Street), one private Drive, and two public alley ways (Alley 'A' and Alley 'B'); refer to Exhibit 3-3. 'A' Street and 'B' Street would provide a 36-foot wide road with 56-foot right-of-way, as required by City standards. Alley 'A' would be 20 feet wide and Alley 'B' would be 16 feet wide. The proposed private drive (serving lots 36 through 40) would be approximately 24 feet wide. Although the drive would be constructed to private street standards, and maintained by the HOA, it would be open to the public.

Water Distribution and Wastewater Conveyance

The project site would connect the proposed water pipelines (located within proposed on-site roadways) to a proposed 8-inch water pipeline located within 1st Street, which would connect to four existing 12-inch water pipelines within Marina Drive. The proposed sewer pipelines (located within the on-site streets) would connect to a six-inch sewer pipeline located in Central Way to the east of the project site.

Storm Drainage Conveyance

The proposed storm drain system would be constructed to follow the existing ground slope. The terrain is moderately flat, sloping northwest to southeast at an approximate one percent slope. The project proposes to retain runoff on-site through a series of on-site basins and underground storage techniques. On-site stormwater treatment would be largely obtained through bio-retention techniques involving Filterra style systems or bio-cells along the street areas, in conjunction with catch basins. It should be noted that no storm drainage for the proposed residential lots would be conveyed across the proposed park/open space area on-site.

Street Vacation

The project would vacate a portion of existing street right-of-way located at the northeast corner of the site, along 1st Street. The right-of-way proposed for vacation totals approximately 7,626 square feet. It should be noted that this portion of 1st Street was obtained from DWP by the City in 1977; however, the City Engineer has deemed it is not needed for public street purposes.

3.4 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Pursuant to Section 15124(b) of the *CEQA Guidelines*, the EIR project description must include “[a] statement of objectives sought by the proposed project....The statement of objectives should include the underlying purpose of the project.”

The proposed project goals and objectives are as follows:

- To create a high-quality residential project that preserves the public views of the water.
- To design and build a residential neighborhood that extends the existing urban form of the Old Town Neighborhood by replicating street layout, lot patterns, and building form.
- To enhance the open space and recreational opportunities for the residents of Seal Beach.
- To preserve public access to the beach through continued use of the San Gabriel River Bike Trail and 1st Street Beach Parking Lot.
- To incorporate sustainable design and construction practices to the greatest degree practical.

3.5 PHASING/CONSTRUCTION

Project grading is anticipated to occur in one phase and would include the finished residential pads. Basic infrastructure (including streets, parkways, curbs, gutters, sidewalks, and water and sewer lines) would be installed in a single phase as part of the overall project grading. The residential units would be developed individually by homeowners depending on market conditions and demand. But for the purposes of this environmental review, the document assumes 24 homes per year in 2014 and 2015. This time frame is conservative in that it assumes all of the impacts from the construction of the homes would occur by year 2015, which is a conservative worst-case scenario in regards to environmental impacts.

3.6 AGREEMENTS, PERMITS, AND APPROVALS

The City of Seal Beach is the Lead Agency for the project and has discretionary authority over the project proposal, which includes the following:

- General Plan Amendments;
- Specific Plan Amendment;
- Zone Changes;

- Redevelopment Plan Amendment;
- Tentative Tract Map;
- Lot Line Adjustments;
- Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions/Architectural Design Guidelines;
- California Environmental Quality Act review;
- Site Plan Review;
- Public Street Vacation;
- Grading Permit; and
- Encroachment Permit and other necessary Department of Public Works permits.

Additionally, there may be a development agreement, owner participation agreement, or disposition and development agreement between the Applicant and the City or the Seal Beach Redevelopment Agency, which would require discretionary review and approval in accordance with applicable law.

Approval of the proposed project is subject to actions set forth by the City of Seal Beach. In addition, the proposed project would require a Coastal Development Permit (CDP) from the California Coastal Commission (CCC).

Project construction is subject to review and/or approval by the following agencies:

- California Department of Transportation;
- California Department of Toxic Substances Control;
- Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro);
- Los Angeles County Flood Control District;
- Orange County Transportation Authority;
- Orange County Sanitation District;
- Orange County Health Care Agency;
- Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board;
- South Coast Air Quality Management District;
- Southern California Association of Governments; and
- State Water Resources Control Board.

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